

Guardian

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January 12th, 2005

Sling Load *Training*

***Phoenix and Lancer team up
for special training***

This January, the Army celebrates Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, a day in which we can reflect on the great accomplishments and vision of the African-American leader. It's on this day that we can strive to reach the dream proclaimed by Dr. King. in his famous "I have a dream" speech.

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state, sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today."

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Aug. 28, 1963



Troops of the 10th Cavalry present arms while in bivouac. The pup tents are quarters at Fort Riley, Kansas, May 28, 1941.

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PHOTO BY SGT. BENJAMIN HOKKANEN



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On the Cover:

Soldiers from Troop A, 2-107th Cavalry prepare to secure a Humvee to the underside of a Black Hawk helicopter during sling load training.

COVER PHOTO BY SPC. ADAM DIELSCHNEIDER

Ready to Reintegrate

Reintegration. Is it too early to use that word? Reintegration is what all Soldiers heading back home will face over the next several months. Whether going back to a spouse, family, a civilian job, parents, college, a fiancé, or even a pet, we Soldiers that are headed home will be faced with tremendous changes. As Soldiers, we live a regimented, well regulated life. We are provided with most of our needs, ranging from basic sustenance to housing to entertainment. We are supplied with all the tools needed to successfully complete our mission. Our existence is made easy, due to the basic structuring of military life. Most think that this is a very easy life, once a comfortable routine has been established.

Soon, for many, this easy life will come to an end. We will depart our safe haven, where four meals a day are prepared and presented to us for our choosing, where our lives are scheduled months in advance, where movies are free. We will re-enter the world that we left behind many months ago, at the doorstep of our deployment station. We will have to make decisions on an hourly basis from which we have been recently spared. To make matters more complicated, we will have to make these decisions in unison with our spouses, children, parents, co-workers and the civilian public. We will attempt to become a part of the life that we left behind in the care of others. The life that others have taken over for us, which has been handled very well, in most cases, is the one into which we will have to return. How do we do this? Do we jump back in with both feet and take back the finances, the child care, the yard work and all, as soon as we arrive home? Should we make changes in the way our absentee lives have been handled? For those of us who left behind romantic contacts, do we expect the closeness and warmth to resume as soon as we walk through

the door?

In my experience, the answer to all these questions is a resounding "NO!" Consulting with some of my soldier "experts," an average time period for decompression is one to two weeks. Upon return from short duty missions, my spouse has remarked that it takes me a *minimum* of 1 week for every week absent to rid myself of my sergeant majoring mode. Is this a good rule for determining how long we will be intolerable to those to which we return? In my case, I pray it doesn't take a full 10 months. Fortunately, this time will vary among individuals. The key to making your return easy, for both you and your caretakers, involves patience and understanding on the parts of all parties involved. By observing simple guidelines, this transition can be painless.

- Don't make changes immediately. It's best to wait about 30 days.
- Assess how your life has been handled in your absence, and praise your caretakers for their help.
- Patiently let your caretakers return these matters to you at their pace, not yours.
- Above all, relax, take it easy and enjoy your return to your family, home, and job. Use this return as a fresh start.

Is it too early to think about reintegration? By thinking of this process prior to deployment, by making this a part of your out-processing this early, we Soldiers can easily become civilianized once again, which is good for our families, loved ones, co-workers and ourselves all at the same time. ★



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Quicktime

Soldiers Train With QuikClot

On the battlefield, when a Soldier is injured and is bleeding badly, time is of the essence. Every minute spent bleeding while trying to get them to medical aid may cost them their life. That is where QuikClot—a product designed to aid in the emergency management of uncontrollable bleeding—comes into play. To better train and equip the Soldiers of Task Force Falcon in the event of being severely wounded on the battlefield, Task Force Medical Falcon offered a “train the trainer” class on the use of QuikClot.

“QuikClot hemostatic agent is a breakthrough, patented product that almost instantly stops high-volume bleeding from open wounds,” stated Ellie Becker, media representative for QuikClot’s manufacturer, Z-Medica. “Made of a granulated mineral substance, it is biologically and botanically inert, leaving little chance of allergic reaction. It represents a first-time-ever opportunity to save lives of countless trauma victims around the world who would otherwise have bled to death before they could be moved to an operating room setting.

The program was designed to provide the U.S. Army with combat medics and Soldiers trained in the product’s use. Medics will be able to provide greater healthcare on the battlefield, throughout evacuation, in battalion aid stations, combat support hospitals, forward surgical teams, and in fixed facility hospitals. The training, conducted by Lt. Col. Ben Chlapek, required one student trainer from Task Forces Medical Falcon, Shield, Protector, Lancer, and Phoenix.

“QuikClot is easy to use,” said Chlapek, “but there is some required training before you can use it.”

“QuikClot hemostatic agent is a truly remarkable medical breakthrough that is having a profound impact on improving the safety and survival of our fighting men and women. It has proven effective in saving the lives of service personnel in Afghanistan and Iraq,” added Becker.

For further information about QuikClot, visit Z-Medica’s website at www.z-medica.com.



PHOTO COURTESY OF Z-MEDICA

(Above and Below) QuikClot, an inorganic wound treatment, is now being used widely in the Army to help save the lives of traumatic wound victims.



PHOTO COURTESY OF Z-MEDICA

Military W-2 Information

The 2004 W-2 forms for military members will now report pay earned while serving in combat zone tax-exclusion areas. This information will allow members to better determine their eligibility for two credits to their federal income tax payments, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC), officials said.

The combat zone pay information will be listed separately in Block 14 of the member’s W-2 form and will not be included with taxable wage information. EITC and CTC, qualifications are based on gross income, which includes pay earned while in a tax-exclusion area. The addition of this information on 2004 W-2s will help determine whether a member meets the IRS requirements for EITC and CTC and which

method of computing taxes is most advantageous to each member’s individual situation. The 2004 W-2s will be available in mid-to-late January, and service members can access their W-2s on the Defense Finance and Accounting Service’s on-line “myPay” system. Officials recommend service members contact their unit tax advisors for more information on the Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, or other tax issues.

Stateside Housing Allowances to Rise

Monthly housing allowances for 910,000 service members living off base in the United States will climb by an average of 8 percent effective Jan. 1, say Defense Department officials. The rise in individual rates, however, will vary significantly, from no change for some grades in some areas to as much as 20 percent to 30 percent for military renters in high-cost areas such as Hawaii.

Revised BAH rates have no direct impact on service members living off base overseas. They get an Overseas Housing Allowance, which is adjusted in the spring and fall each year to reflect changes in out-of-pocket costs for stateside peers and changes in the dollar's value relative to local currency. The 2005 Basic Allowance for Housing rates not only will keep pace with an average 4.4 percent rise in rental costs nationwide

over last year, but also are high enough to close a remaining 3.5 percent gap between 2004 BAH and median rental expenses nationwide.

BAH recipients will enjoy a fifth and final "above-inflation" annual adjustment that since the year 2000 has eliminated a 22 percent disparity between stateside allowances and rental costs reported in housing surveys.

For more information, see www.military.com.

Military Intelligence Readiness Improvement Program

The Army National Guard has been tasked to contribute significant resources to the Global War on Terrorism. Many of these resources include low density, high demand military occupational specialties such as military intelligence.

In order to meet the increasing demands on its military intelligence force structure, the Army National Guard authorized the creation of the Military Intelligence Readiness Improvement Program. A component of the Military Intelligence Readiness Improvement Program is the Augmentation Management Platform (AMP).

The purpose of the AMP is to identify individuals who were earlier awarded a military intelligence MOS that is

currently in demand. Those individuals can qualify for the AMP if they are not currently a member of the ARNG military intelligence force structure, and they reside at least 150 miles from an ARNG military intelligence unit. AMP allows Soldiers to continue with their military intelligence careers despite the geographical distance between the Soldiers and their units.

It also allows the ARNG military intelligence force structure to continue to take advantage of those MI skills so necessary to the current ARNG mission. AMP can be contacted at DSN: 327-9554; email: GOMIRIP@ngb.army.mil; website: www.ngb.army.mil/GOMIRIP.

Student Loan Info

American Forces Press Service reports that military personnel who have been deployed or mobilized are not required to make student loan payments during their absences. Federal regulations require lenders to postpone the student loan program payments of active duty military personnel. This was done through the Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students (HEROES) Act of 2003.

This applies to members of the National Guard and Ready Reserves who have been called to active duty, as well as personnel whose duty station has been changed as a result of a military mobilization.

The regulations apply to student loans made under the Federal Family Education Loan, William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan and Federal Perkins Loan programs.

RC Officers Get New Promotion Policy

Under a new policy taking effect in January, Army Reserve officers will no longer compete for promotion against National Guard officers. Full-time Army Reserve officers will also compete for promotion only with other full-timers. The assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) recently approved a change in promotion policy that creates three new competitive categories for officers previously considered under the single Army Promotion List competitive category:

- A National Guard category
- An Army Reserve category for Active-Guard-Reserve officers, known as AGRs
- A category for all other Army Reserve officers

The change will enable RC mandatory promotion boards to select officers based upon "the unique force structure requirements" of the Army Reserve and Army National Guard. For more information, visit www.military.com.

Drill Pay Calculator

Military.com has just updated its drill pay calculators for 2005. Enter pay grade, time in service, and number of drill periods, and the calculator will compute your drill pay. These pay rates are effective as of January 1, 2005. One drill weekend usually includes four drill periods. E-1 personnel with less than four months of service earn \$35.49 per drill period.

By 1st Sgt. Brandi Schiff



PHOTO BY 1ST SGT. BRANDI SCHIFF

Soldiers from the Hellenic 506th Mechanized Infantry Battalion dance during the New Year's celebration at Camp Rigas Fereos.

Hellenic New Year's Celebration

A few American troops were invited to help start the New Year right at the Hellenic (Greek) camp. Expecting a typical Army lunch and dining facility, the visiting Soldiers were surprised when they walked in and heard live music entertaining the Hellenic troops, complete with a Hellenic type of guitar, called a "Bouzouki." There was no line to stand in as all the soldiers were treated with traditional Hellenic cuisine brought straight to their table.

Hellenic commander, Lt. Col. Georgios Kallinis, 506th Mechanized Infantry Battalion, came and greeted the American Soldiers at the door as the Hellenic soldiers applauded to show their appreciation for the guests joining in their New Year's Day lunch festivities.

Directed to sit at the commander's table, the troops dined on traditional Hellenic cuisine, and ended the meal with rich chocolate mousse.

After dinner, both male and female Soldiers were coaxed into dancing to the traditional Hellenic celebration

dance known as "Tsifteteli."

Afterwards, it was time for the host nation soldiers to show their guests how it's done. Starting off with the Camp Bondsteel LNO, Hellenic Staff Sgt. Thomas Vlachos, who started spinning and dancing in what seemed to be an American type of break-dancing, but were actually Hellenic moves in the traditional Hellenic form. "I danced a different kind of dance, which is called the 'Zeibekiko.' It depends on the rhythm of the music how a certain dance is going to be performed," explained Vlachos.

Kallinis, who was glad to have the Soldiers join in their New Year's Day celebration, was quite proud of their Hellenic New Year's Day event.

"It is my pleasure to share our great Hellenic traditions with the American Soldiers that we work so closely with on many different occasions. I truly appreciate that they took the time to come join us and hope they enjoyed their visit with us on New Year's Day," said Kallinis.

Italian Chief Warrant Officer Peter Motiekonis, MSU Liaison at Camp Bondsteel, was also among the guests to the Hellenic celebration. "It was so nice to be invited to the Hellenic camp for lunch," said Motiekonis. "It was an honor to be received so well by the Hellenic commander. Everything was so well prepared, the food was excellent and the service was so friendly, and the traditional Hellas music was very pleasant to hear. It was also quite a treat to see the Hellenic soldiers dancing in their traditional way."

The camaraderie shared by the international troops was an experience they will most certainly take home with them, said Staff Sgt. Teague Bode, 734th Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), who also attended the lunch.

"I've never celebrated New Years with another country's soldiers before," said Bode. "Experiencing different entertainment, food and traditions was interesting and enjoyable. They certainly made us feel welcome as their guests."

Health and fitness: find your balance

There's more to being fit and healthy than eating right and exercising regularly.

Keeping a journal is a great way to maintain your mental health.



PHOTO BY SPC. ADAM DIELSCHNEIDER

Health and fitness are more than just eating right and exercising. While both are beneficial for a myriad of reasons, they alone are often not enough to ensure a long, productive life. After all, while the body may benefit, the mind requires more than just an eight-minute-per-mile pace and plenty of complex carbohydrates to prosper.

For most of us, working out allows us to blow off steam. Not only are we exercising our bodies, we're letting the miles and repetitions blast away the stress of a hard day, the loneliness of separation, and the tedium of deployment. The workout becomes a "relief valve" of sorts that allows us to keep things in perspective and face the next day with a clear head and perhaps a more balanced outlook.

But what happens when you can't workout? Take away the relief valve and where does all that accumulated angst go? After all, injuries happen and OPTEMPO rules the workout. What are you going to do when you can't run a bad day out of your system? Fire up a pack of smokes and hit the Twinkies? While I'm sure there are some heads nodding out there, I think maybe we ought to look at some different choices, the kind that help us solve our problems instead of simply coating them in sugar and nicotine.

It's important for all of us to consider our mental wellbeing as something that is intrinsically tied to the health and

welfare of our physical bodies. After all, what affects our mind affects everything else - our workouts, our social lives, even our performance as Soldiers. Knowing yourself well enough to find an outlet for your problems outside the gym can be key to maintaining balance when the road of life starts getting bumpy.

For myself, I write - I keep a journal. It's nothing special, just a word document I keep on my personal laptop. I try (and usually fail) to update it daily, and happily admit that none of the writing in it will ever be mistaken for the lost works of Shakespeare. Still, since mid-2002 it has been a constant companion and an easy sounding board for days both good and bad.

Like working out, maintaining a journal requires discipline. The simple act of putting a voice to your day can often be as hard to accomplish as hitting the gym.

The act of writing in a journal, like working out, can be therapeutic. After all, for many of us, one of the beneficial aspects of exercising (other than being able to see our toes) is the fact that it affords a sense of completion. While nothing else may have gone right, at least you were able to finish your workout - mission accomplished - and you have the purifying sweat to prove it.

Journaling can provide the same sense of catharsis by allowing you to spend a few minutes detailing the

events of the day, summarizing the good, the bad, and the ugly. What went right, what really didn't, and who's on your "list" this week and *why*.

The benefit of journaling is admittedly a bit more esoteric than running five miles or playing in a volleyball tournament. But the repetition, the discipline, and the act of filling a blank space with your daily baggage can be an effective relief valve capable of either replacing or complimenting the one you get by exercising. The sense of completion (while free of endorphins) is the same.

Most importantly, journaling does something that working out doesn't do all that effectively. It allows us to look back on ourselves at a later date and evaluate how things stand today. While we can all gauge the benefit of our workouts by our performance in sports, the PT Test, or simply how we feel after "Radar Hill" - how we're doing holistically and emotionally isn't really represented. That's where the journal comes in.

Part of journaling is rediscovering what you have written. The longer and more frequently you make entries, the more information and history you preserve. This affords you a better chance of discovering recurring problems, seeing your reactions to daily stresses, or experiencing the simple pleasure of reliving a favorite (and possibly forgot-

See *HEALTH*, page 23



PHOTO COURTESY OF HECKLER & KOCH

Your new rifle... maybe

Heckler & Koch's XM8 could be the replacement for the beloved M16 and M4 rifles.

This Soldier is shown holding an XM8 prototype with the standard 12.5-inch barrel.

Many folks have a lot of negative things to say about the M16. Some of these are deserved, and others are not. Regardless, the M16 has served the needs of the Army for decades and the latest iteration, the M4 Carbine, has more fans than detractors. Whether the M4 simply is less bad than an M16A2 or is an outstanding weapon is completely open to your judgment.

The replacement for the M16-series

weapons is on the way. One of the best (and possibly only) candidates is the XM8 made by Heckler & Koch. The XM8 was originally a component of the next-generation weapon system called the XM29. The XM29 system is designed to use an over-and-under configuration. The upper portion is an air burst weapon that can be programmed on-the-fly to explode where you need it. The bottom portion of the weapon is the 5.56mm assault rifle portion. Since the air burst munition is nowhere near fielding, the Army decided to look at putting the XM8 into the hands of Soldiers right away, since it does not require undeveloped technology.

The Army's choice of a 5.56mm cartridge is bound to find a good deal of resistance, but the XM8 is as fully-

loaded as your favorite sports car. The add-ons for this rifle are just incredible.

Even looking past the integrated, multi-function sights with laser illuminator, semi-transparent magazines and fully-adjustable buttstock, the XM8 is great because it is modular. This is outstanding because if you need a compact carbine, simply swap barrels and take off the buttstock. Need a grenade launcher? Shotgun? Just attach it underneath.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HECKLER & KOCH

Sniper rifle? Switch barrels and optics. Or swap barrels, add a 100-round magazine and bi-pod grips and you've got an automatic rifle to pour rounds downrange. With a curb weight of 6.4 pounds for the prototype, the weapon can be cleaned in less than four minutes and does not require continual re-zeroing. Each of the four barrel sizes can be swapped out quickly: 9-inch Compact Carbine for almost submachine gun size, 12.5-inch standard barrel, 20-inch match-grade barrel for the reach out and touch someone work, and 20-inch heavy barrel for sustained automatic fire.

It can also come in a variety of col-

ors.

"That means commanders will have the ability to tailor their weapon systems to day or night, like we do today, and for specific functions for soldiers throughout the unit," Lt. Col. Matthew Clarke explained. Clarke, the project manager for individual weapons at the Picatinny, N.J., research facility, said the Army has ordered 200 XM8's for the Army Test and Evaluation Command to test during the last quarter of the year.

The XM8 has been through limited field-testing, and modifications have been added based on Soldier input. Since the program has seen its share of difficulties, there are certainly no guarantees of the rifle becoming the next rifle to replace the M16. The general goal is for the all the parts of the XM8 to be used on any of the variants.

The XM8 system has some great qualities that could really benefit Soldiers. One of the greatest

assets that it has is a different gas system that really improves reliability in that it doesn't

send carbon gases

into the receiver. H&K claims the XM8 can fire 15,000 rounds without cleaning or lubrication. Now, there's no way you'd let it go that long without cleaning, but it is nice to know you could.

See XM8, page 23



Having faith in the community

Soldiers demonstrate creative and caring ways to promote a good vision in Kosovo.

Col. Joseph Maranto, chief optometrist for Task Force Medical Falcon, sits with the 12-year-old recipient of new glasses at the boy's school.



PHOTO BY SGT. GREIG DAHLKE

Since arriving in Kosovo, Soldiers have done many good deeds which promote peace, thereby instilling faith in the community. Although our cameras cannot capture the winning over of every heart and witness the reception of all that our fine Soldiers do give, some events cannot and should not be overlooked.

A kind act like this occurred in the village of Donja Stubla/Stubla e eperme, when Soldiers got together and delivered a new pair of glasses to a boy who could barely see. One might think this was just a simple act of kindness, but upon further examination, one does recognize the long-term affects that this giving does foster.

First of all, here's what happened: A 12-year-old boy was seen Nov. 7 at the Task Force Lancer-sponsored Medical Civil Assistance Program (MEDCAP) in Gornja Stubla/Stubla e eperme. The boy's father came just as the medics were closing the doors. He asked the doctors for help, and soon his son was being examined by the task force optometrist, Col. Joseph Maranto of Task Force Medical Falcon. The diagnosis was "accommodated esotropia," a condition indicating crossing of the

eyes from extreme farsightedness.

For remedy, the doctor prescribed a set of glasses that would allow the child to see clearly. On that day, the strongest pair the Soldiers had with them was only half strong enough. The Soldiers gladly handed these over for the boy to use until Staff Sgt. Jonathan Koen, Optometry NCOIC of Task Force Medical Falcon, could later make the child a new pair back at Camp Bondsteel. When making the rounds in the village, the Soldiers delivered the new glasses to the child while he was at school.

After the delivery, I could tell that the boy's perceptions changed immediately. He appeared more confident and, despite the obvious confusion presented by being able to see clearly for the first time, he appeared enlivened, as did his classmates.

Later, when I asked the child what he wanted to be when he grew up, he replied, "An eye doctor."

Maranto underscored the significance of this assertion.

"The MEDCAP certainly has an impact on the population that we reach, but the impression of goodwill that we leave with the children is something

that can be far-reaching, and has an impact far beyond what we realize," said Maranto. "They peek into our tents and see what we do, and some of them may decide that this is something that they want to do with their life to help their people."

The story spread in the village, and when Soldiers made their rounds, people were still talking about it two weeks later, said Staff Sgt. Brian Clum, a medic from Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, Task Force Lancer.

We should recognize that we are all diplomats here, and that what we do has consequences that surely will last. By reaching out and assisting people to see more clearly, and by exhibiting behaviors that are peaceful, we are, indeed, investing our faith in these communities.

Perhaps Koen, the lens crafter, said it best when asked how it felt to help another: "It is great. Anytime you can help someone, it is wonderful, but it's extra special when you help a child." ✱



Sgt. Greig Dahlke is a member of the 364th MPAD and can be reached at greig.dahlke@bondsteel2.areur.army.mil

What Makes the Army: Soldiers



PHOTO BY SGT. BENJAMIN HOKKANEN

The Army's values and methods have a funny way of finding their way into each Soldier's everyday life. Whether it's planning a family trip or how you handle yourself at work, the lessons we as Soldiers learn stick with us in all that we do. Staff Sgt. Ashley is one such example of living the Army values, and, as Command Sgt. Maj. William Belding put it, he's "pure cavalry."

Why did you join the Army?

Basically just to give my life a little focus. I was in my first semester at college and not really going anywhere, I really didn't have any idea what I wanted to do with my life, and so for some strange reason I thought the Army would give me a little excitement and maybe give me a couple of years to think about what I wanted to do with my life. So I joined for two years. When I finished with Active Duty, they offered me a big bonus to join the National Guard for six years, so I thought I'd go ahead and do that. If you told me I'd still be doing this 18 years later I would have told you that you were crazy.

What has kept you in the National Guard all this time?

The people. We're a pretty tight unit. I got to know a lot of the guys and we get along well. Of course, most of the original people I came in with are gone now. It's funny how one day you look around and you realize that you're the old guy. There's about three or four guys left who have been in since I came into the Guard. But basically, it's been the people who have kept me re-enlisting.

Have you always been a Scout?

Roger that.

What made you decide to become a

Scout?

I was at the military entrance processing station and they showed me all the cool videos. My plan was to go Active for only two years, have some excitement, get out and then go back to school. Out of all the videos the recruiters showed me, becoming a scout looked the most interesting. That was back in the days of the Cold War when everyone was gearing up for a big land battle in Europe. It seemed like it would be a fun and exciting job to do, and it was.

Full Name: Michael Ashley
DOB: Dec. 13, 1968
MOS: 19D - Scout
College: Northern Kentucky University
Hometown: Florence, Ky.
Unit: 1st Platoon, A Troop, 2-107th Cavalry
Rank: Staff Sergeant

What is a day in the life of Staff Sgt. Ashley like here in Kosovo?

Every day here is really different. Some days I go out with my patrols; some days I go out with my lieutenant to talk to people in the community; other days I have to spend time doing platoon sergeant business--sit all day in meetings and getting supplies, scheduling interpreters--administrative things like that. As a platoon sergeant, I'm one of the expeditors. The command staff comes up with the things they want us to do

and we take care of the details. It's a lot of chasing my guys around, trying to get things done.

What's been the biggest challenge you've faced since you've been in the Army?

Nothing major. It's been a series of small things. It's been a challenge, especially keeping the civilian career moving while going on deployments like this or just going out on regular Annual Trainings. My family isn't always understanding of it, especially on a deployment like this. I just re-enlisted before this deployment, too, so they weren't too thrilled with that.

The biggest physical challenge was when I tore my anterior cruciate ligament (connective tissue of the knee) in 1993. I had to spend a year re-habbing that to be able to come back and pass the Army Physical Fitness Test. But I did it, and now I'm here.

Was there any difficulty for you getting things ready at home before the deployment?


Luckily for me, everyone was really supportive. My employer was very supportive of this deployment--before they sold the company anyway. My family has been supportive as well. They were a little ticked off at the beginning, but

See ASHLEY, page 22



Soldiers from Troop A, 2-107th Cavalry brace themselves against the prop wash of a Black Hawk helicopter during sling load training.

PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. TOMAS ROFKAHR

A large Black Hawk helicopter is shown in the upper left, hovering over a military Humvee. Two soldiers are standing on the roof of the Humvee, which has "KFOR" written on its side. The scene is set on a wet, paved surface with a line of bare trees in the background under an overcast sky.

Lancer & Phoenix Hook Up

Story by Spc. Adam Dielschneider

Two Soldiers stand on the roof of the hard-top Humvee, one grasping a thick loop of rope, the other ready to stabilize his partner. The calm air of the morning is whipped about violently as a Black Hawk helicopter approaches, coming to a hover just over their heads. Now in the eye of the storm, the first Soldier lifts the rope loop into a hook in the bottom of the helicopter while the other Soldier holds him steady. When the rope is secured, both Soldiers jump down from the Humvee and clear the area, allowing the Humvee to be lifted off the ground by the aircraft.

Sling load training is an annual requirement for aviators, said Chief Warrant Officer

Continued on next page



PHOTO BY SPC. ADAM DIELSCHNEIDER

Continued from previous page

Rob Diamond, task force standardization pilot, Task Force Phoenix. In a wartime situation, sling loading allows helicopters to airlift cargo and small vehicles over rough terrain in a very short amount of time, said Diamond.

This hook-up process was repeated many times Dec. 31 during sling load training at an abandoned Army post near Vitina/Viti. Soldiers from Task Forces Phoenix and Lancer coordinated their efforts to make the training happen.

Three major groups of Soldiers were trained that day: ground crew Soldiers from TF Lancer, and crew chiefs and pilots from TF Phoenix. Each group had a distinct and important part to play in the training.

The ground crew, comprised of Soldiers from Troop A, 2-107th Cavalry, were responsible for preparing the two Humvees for sling loading.

"First we strip all the equipment out of (the Humvees)," said 2nd Lt. Dion Grener, 2nd platoon leader for Troop A, 2-107th Cavalry. "We protect the windshield, windows, and headlights. We usually use cardboard or 100-mph tape. You also have to secure the steering wheel and make sure the doors stay shut

using (small rope)."

The most important part of preparing the Humvee is the sling itself, which is used to support the weight of the vehicle during the flight.

"There is a certain checklist you go down," said Sgt. Daniel Skinner, Troop A, 2-107th Cavalry, who was the instructor for the ground crew. "After you finish that, you inspect your sling set. You hook up your sling set, and once it's hooked up, you have one hook-up man and an assistant hook-up man to prepare the vehicle while you wait for the aircraft."

When the vehicles are ready, the aircraft crews get the Black Hawks warmed up and ready to fly. Ground crew personnel position one Soldier about 200 feet in front of the rigged Humvee to act as a ground guide. As the helicopter approaches the vehicle, this Soldier gives arm signals to help instruct the pilots about their position and the status



PHOTO BY SPC. ADAM DIELSCHNEIDER

(Top) Sgt. Todd Wallace, Troop A, 2-107th Cavalry, makes the final preparations for the vehicle sling. (Above) Staff Sgt. Gary Sanders, Troop A, 2-107th Cavalry inspects the vehicle sling.

of the hook-up.

During this alignment process, a great deal of communication is going on between the crew chiefs and pilots inside



PHOTO BY SPC. ADAM DIELSCHNEIDER

the aircraft.

"Once we're above the load, the crew chiefs basically take over," said Warrant Officer Aaron Rod, one of the pilots being trained. "There's a ground guide on the ground that the pilots will take commands from until the helicopter is over the load. At that point, it's more listening to the crew chief, and once he sees the load, he basically walks us in."

Staff Sgt. James Thrasher, a crew chief and enlisted crew trainer for sling load training, best describes the hook-up process from the aircraft's perspective. "The pilot pretty much concentrates on flying the aircraft," said Thrasher. "The best point of view is for the crew chiefs inside the aircraft, and they will monitor

the load from the point that it disappears from the pilot's view. At that point, it's all verbal communication. The crew chief has to constantly update the pilot on the position of the load.

"Once they are in position and the load is connected, we wait for the hook-up crew to clear the area," said Thrasher. "Once they are clear of the danger area, the pilots can start bringing the aircraft up. They will feel the tension in the load, and at that point they bring it to a 10-foot hover and then fly away."

As soon as the load is off the ground and the helicopter is ready to fly, a majority of the responsibility shifts back to the pilots. Because of the added weight of the load, pilots must be aware of the

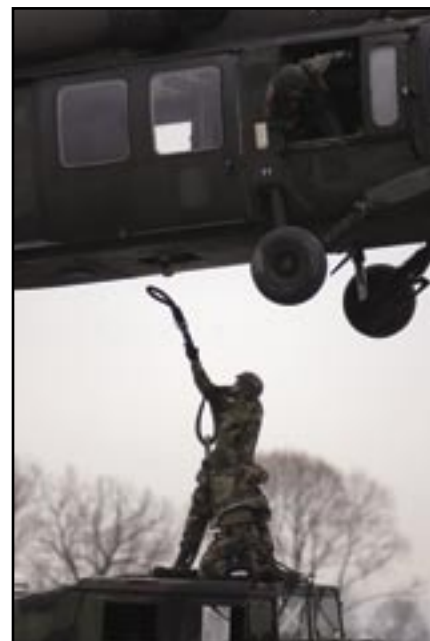


PHOTO BY SPC. ADAM DIELSCHNEIDER

(Left) A Soldier from Troop A, 2-107th Cavalry gives the thumbs-up signal, notifying the pilots that the vehicle is ready to lift. (Above) Soldiers from Troop A, 2-107th Cavalry attempt to hook the sling loop to the bottom of the helicopter.

different handling characteristics of the aircraft, said Diamond. "The aircraft will fly a little more sluggishly, turns will be shallower, and approaches will be longer and shallower," said Diamond. "There's a lot of power management involved. If the load starts to oscillate, we have to either speed up or slow down to control that. Every load has a certain speed that it flies best at. It's up to us to find that."

During the short flight, the crew chiefs continue to update the pilot on the condition of the load, said Thrasher. If there is any indication that the load is spinning or swinging back and forth, pilots must immediately try to regain stability of the load. An unstable load, under dangerous circumstances, may have to be jettisoned.

Once a short test flight is complete, pilots bring the aircraft back to the landing area, gently lower the cargo to the ground. Crew chiefs unhook the sling, and the helicopter is landed nearby to get ready for the next practice run. Meanwhile, the vehicle that was dropped off is looked over, repositioned, and prepared for another flight.

Overall, the training went well, said Skinner. The two task forces worked well together and were impressed with each other's work.

"It was one of the most professional units that I've worked with," said Dia-

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Sgt. Brian Power, Troop A, 2-107th Cavalry, takes part in the land navigation portion of earning his Expert Infantry Badge.

Earning The Expert Infantry Badge

Story and Photos by Sgt. Benjamin Hokkanen

Jump wings. Air assault badge. The Expert Infantry Badge (EIB). All of these are honors that many Infantry Soldiers wish to attain during their career, while few actually get to earn any, let alone all three. Of these recognitions, many would say that the EIB is the most elusive to attain.

"To most people in the infantry, the EIB is the most important badge they could earn," said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Glenn, Company A, 1-148th Infantry and member of the EIB board. "The Expert Infantry Badge shows everyone that this person is an expert in his field and works well under pressure. Also, the EIB is probably the toughest badge that an infantry Soldier will earn, not because of the physical demand but because of the difficulty of the task and the pressure that is on the Soldier while he is trying to earn his EIB. Usually, only about 10 percent of the candidates earn their EIB."

There are 53 Soldiers here in Kosovo attempting to join the ranks of infantrymen before them by completing the 37 punishing tasks to standard to earn the right to pin on the badge.

"We started with over 100 interested

in going for their EIB and have had a total of 86 do some sort of prerequisite and either decide to quit or that the road to earning the EIB was not for him," said Glenn.

The EIB was created in October 1943. The dress EIB is a blue bar, with the trim and musket in silver, and the subdued EIB has an olive background and a black musket and trim. The musket is taken from the infantry branch insignia and represents the first U.S. shoulder arm, the 1875 Springfield Arsenal musket. The first Expert Infantry Badge was awarded to Tech. Sgt. Walter Bull at Ft. Bragg on March 29, 1944.

Soldiers must hold either an infantry or Special Forces military occupation specialty, be a warrant officer identified as an 18A (special operations technician), or be a commissioned infantry officer to even be eligible for the EIB. To be awarded the EIB, service members must complete a rigorous testing phase on various tasks.

While the tasks have changed with the times, the challenge of attaining the badge remains the same.

Prior to going through the EIB test-

ing though, Soldiers must complete some grueling prerequisites; a 12-mile road march in under three hours; the Army Physical Fitness Test with event scores of 70 or higher for that Soldier's age group; meet the standard prescribed in AR 600-9, The Army Weight Control Program; day and night land navigation, finding two out of three points with a lensatic compass and global positioning system, and qualify expert on their assigned M16-series rifle or M4-carbine. With these "simple" tasks out of the way, only 37 more tasks stand in the way of these Soldiers realizing another career Army goal, said Glenn.

This marathon of 37 tasks includes: install/recover an M21 antitank mine; report information of potential intelligence value (SALUTE); prepare M136 (AT4) launcher for firing/performance misfire procedures; maintain, perform function check on an M60 or M240B machine gun; load, correct malfunctions on, and unload a .50-caliber machine gun; set headspace and timing on a .50-caliber machine gun; and prepare the

See EIB, page 23



Spc. Jesse Lemon, C Company, 1-148th Infantry, TF Protector shoots an azimuth during EIB qualification.



Lt. Col. Dannie Stanberry from the Joint Implementation Commission hands out unit patches to Serbian soldiers during the synchronized patrol.

TF Shield Conducts 'Sync Patrol'

Story and Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Bill Brockberg

Leading his platoon to a starting point to conduct a patrol along the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL), 1st Lt. Daniel S. Cooper of Company C, 206th Engineer Battalion approached the unit that would be patrolling from the other side of the ABL. Simple enough, except that the unit waiting to conduct this patrol was a Serbian Army platoon.

Maj. Dejan Petkovic and his soldiers, a part of Joint Security Forces (JSF), were meeting with Cooper and his Soldiers to conduct a synchronized patrol. A synchronized patrol is where the Serbian soldiers patrol up and down the Serbian side of the ABL and American Soldiers do likewise on the Kosovo side.

The two platoons assembled on each side of a road at the ABL, faced each other and had a brief ceremony before the foot patrol began. Cooper commented that after all of the training he and his platoon went through on the ABL,

he could finally put a face to a former adversary. However, when he first met his Serbian counterparts, he felt a sigh of relief. "The Serbian patrol members were just like us. I immediately felt an affinity for these Serbian soldiers," Cooper said.

At the starting point, gone was any indication of hostility, anger or resentment. Sgt. Steven D. Banks, 3rd Squad leader of 1st Platoon, Company C, 206th Engineers, explained that training and experience led to a very different feeling.

"As a former Marine infantryman, I have had the chance to work with a lot of foreign militaries in the past, so I can't say that I was nervous or feeling reluctant about this meeting at all," Banks said. "As American Soldiers, we are asked to do a lot of different things, so we do them with great honor and to the best of our abilities. So, the greatest feeling I had was excitement."

Lt. Col. Gordon L. Ellis, Task Force

Shield commander, addressed both platoons at the starting point, followed by Cooper and the Serbian platoon commander. Then all platoon members shook hands and exchanged unit patches and other items with one another just before the synchronized patrol began.

"I can remember not so long ago...and here in Kosovo when American air power was actively engaging the Serbian Army in combat," Ellis said as he described his feelings of this first synchronized patrol. "It struck me what a major change it is for an American military force to have a positive interaction with a Serbian military force. You can't help but be struck by this strange change that we were situated in."

When the brief pomp and circumstance preceding the synchronized patrol was over, the Serbian Army platoon marched off to patrol their side of the ABL, and the Americans went the



(Top and Left) Soldiers from Company C, 206th Engineer Battalion meet with soldiers from the Serbian Army at the administrative boundary line. (Above) Serbian Army soldiers line up on one side of the road during the briefing at the beginning of the synchronized patrol.

opposite direction to patrol the Kosovo side. The synchronized patrol itself was no pomp, no fluff. It was an idea that surfaced about two years ago, but active discussion and planning began with the previous rotation.

"We had a starting point and four check points spaced approximately one kilometer apart along the ABL," said Banks. "The vegetation was very thick, and there were a lot of steep hills that we had to climb to reach each point.

"The best part of the patrol was when our reserve squad encountered some illegal woodcutters. They had to detain one of these individuals for being on

the wrong side of the border and illegally cutting wood. Moments later, JSF had found and detained another member of this same woodcutting crew that tried to make a run for the border. It really couldn't get much better than that," Banks said.

"Both sides of this patrol really projected a great presence of authority by doing this, and that was the main focus from the beginning," said Banks.

"Interestingly, this was an initiative which began with the 5-B (U.S. KFOR rotation)," Ellis said. Ellis and representatives from Task Force Shield learned of synchronized patrols during their pre-deployment reconnaissance. After the transfer of authority, planning and coordination began in earnest.

"Once we arrived in Kosovo, dur-

ing our first coordination meeting, the issue of synchronized patrols was a very significant topic for the JSF," Ellis said. "This was the first opportunity to conduct a synchronized operation so we had to develop some working relationships rather quickly."

Planning and coordination continued from the first meeting. In a bi-lateral meeting with JSF and Capt. Scott Thomas, commander, Company C, 206th Engineer Battalion, border violations and certain criminal activity had been discussed.

"Illegal activities are conducted along the ABL constantly," Thomas said. "When KFOR intervenes on those participating in illegal activities, most

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Kicking Back

Lancer Soldiers sponsor youth soccer tournament



(Above) A boy prepares to kick the ball during the soccer tournament. (Left) Soldiers from Troop B, 2-107th Cavalry watch the games from the sidelines.



*Story by Capt. Richard Davis
and 2nd Lt. Eric Mutcher
Photos by 1st Sgt. Phillip Metz*

Troop B, 2-107th Cavalry of Task Force Lancer sponsored a youth soccer tournament encompassing 21 schools in the Vitina/Viti municipality. The purpose of the tournament was to allow the children, parents, and town leaders to come together and experience the cooperative spirit and friendly competition gained in youth athletics. The tournament allowed Serbian and Albanian children to forget their ethnic differences and take pride in their similarities. The parents of the players realized from this interaction that they had old friends that they had been separated from by the ethnic walls.

The tournament exemplifies the progress that the Viti/Vitina municipality has made in its ability to grow together. Troop B set the stage, and the teachers, children and parents made the tournament successful. Many of the teachers and children stated that this was progress in knocking down the ethnic walls, and opened a few doors to get the dialog between old friends started again.

1st Sgt. Phillip Metz, Troop B, conducted the majority of the coordination and planning required for the idea to become reality. The response he received was much greater than expected. Metz,

a teacher in his civilian occupation, has been actively involved since the beginning of the rotation in coordinating activities with the schools in Troop B's sector. When he began to investigate the possibilities of sponsoring a school soccer tournament, the initial response from the principals was positive.

Twenty-one teams participated in the tournament, three of which were Serbian. The teams were named after the school system they came from and consisted of: Vitina 1 and 2, Vitina S, Slatina 1, 2, and 3, Mogila, Trpeza, Verban, Smira, Zintinje, Radivoje, Pozharan, Skifter, Begunce, Stubla, Klokot, Remnik, Ljubiste, Vrbovac and Kabash. A single elimination bracket was established and the tournament was structured for five rounds.

A variety of people contributed their time and effort to make the tournament happen, including town leaders, school principals, teachers, and Troop B Soldiers. The preliminary round was played at the schools, followed by two rounds at the Mogila soccer complex. The Soldiers stood on the sidelines with the parents, supporting the teams from the towns they regularly patrolled.

The last rounds took place on Camp Bondsteel at the Northtown Fitness

Center through cooperation with Morale, Welfare, and Recreation. The "final four" and championship games were held on Nov. 17. The children arrived, excited and with determination in their eyes—ready for the games to begin. The four finalist teams were Skifter, Stubia, Verban, and Kabash. Skifter won four points to one over Stubia. Kabash won over Verban by the same score. After a short break, the passions of both teams became tangible in the gymnasium. The game was close until the very end, when Skifter scored multiple goals to win five to one.

Plaques were presented to the final four teams, the Skifter team also receiving a commemorative soccer ball. All of the 21 teams that participated in the tournament received a certificate of appreciation.

The tournament was successful because it allowed children, parents, principals, and community leaders to meet, cooperate, and experience the competitive spirit of youth athletics. The players took pride in their schools, their communities, and their ethnicity.

Skifter's team was noticeably thrilled about winning the tournament, but in many respects, the true champions of the tournament were all who participated.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOME OF HEROES WEBSITE

Base named after World War II lieutenant

Camp Monteith is named after 1st Lt. Jimmie Monteith, Jr., 16th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division.

Imagine yourself with a number of your fellow Soldiers in an aquatic troop carrier off the coast of France. You know what's on the beach waiting for you: a full complement of the German army. When the transport slams into the wet sand, the front hatch drops and you rush onto the beach. The air is thick with flying bullets and mortars. You keep low to the ground to avoid the fire... but some of your fellow Soldiers aren't as lucky.

You then dive behind the safety of hard cover and peer anxiously out to notice the almost rhythmic rattling of machinegun fire tearing through the smoke-choked intensity. A lieutenant, who actually served in this scenario, probably shared what you would be feeling at this point. Yet what made him unique was that he pressed on through that fear and trepidation to lead his men to the very end. That lieutenant's name: Jimmie Monteith, Jr.

Camp Monteith, home of Task Force Shield, is named after Medal of Honor recipient 1st Lt. Jimmie W. Monteith, Jr., 16th Infantry, 1st Infan-

try Division. Just like Staff Sgt. James Bondsteel, Monteith was a 1st Infantry Division Soldier.

Monteith was born on July 1, 1917 in Low Moor, Va. He joined the service in Richmond, Va. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty" as part of the D-Day

Invasion on June 6, 1944 near Colleville-sur-Mer, France.

Under heavy enemy fire he landed as part of

the initial assault wave on the coast of occupied France. If you have seen any movie portraying the D-Day invasion, then you should be familiar with the chaos surrounding those Soldiers on that gray day.

"Acting without any regard to his personal safety, Monteith continually moved up and down the war-torn beach, reorganizing his men for further assault. He then led the assault over a narrow protective ledge and across the flat, open and exposed terrain to the comparative safety of a nearby cliff," said the official citation.

Returning across the field to the

beach, he came across a pair of Allied tanks under a violent barrage of enemy artillery and machinegun fire. In a show of courageous leadership, Monteith walked the tanks through a deadly minefield and into strategic firing positions, completely exposing himself to the intense and harsh fire. Under his direction, several enemy positions were destroyed. Rejoining his company, he led his men in capturing an advantageous position on the hill.

Supervising the defense of his newly won position against vicious counterattacks, Monteith continued to ignore his own safety, repeatedly crossing the 200 or 300 yards of open terrain under heavy fire to bolster his defenses, said the record.

But even his gallant leadership and unquestionable courage were not enough to keep him from succumbing to the enemy's attack--the enemy succeeded in completely surrounding Monteith and his unit. In that singular moment, while leading the flight out of the situation, he was killed by enemy fire. The courage, gallantry, and intrepid leadership displayed by Monteith are worthy of emulation. ☒



Spc. Ian Blake is a member of the 364th MPAD and can be reached at ian.blake@bondsteel2.areu.army.mil

"Monteith was awarded the Medal of Honor for 'conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty.'"

now they have adapted to it all and are behind me all the way.

What has been the biggest highlight for you on this deployment?

There have been several different things. I did the Big Duke climb and that was pretty cool. I didn't volunteer for that, but someone put my name on the list. Once I got up there I was glad that I did it because it turned out to be really cool. I did the Dancon 25 km road march. That was really good, not to mention it was the longest road march I have done in a long time. New Year's Eve was really interesting around here with all the celebratory weapons fire coming out of everywhere at the last minute. But the big one has been just getting to meet all the people out in sector. It isn't something you get to do back home. It's a whole different world over here, and it's been really interesting getting to see it and get to know the people a little bit.

What do you do professionally back in the civilian world?

Well, I was the transportation director for a propane company. Since we've been here though, just a few weeks ago the company that I worked for got bought out. So that puts my civilian job status a little bit up in the air right now. I don't know if they are going to be keeping our office open or what is going to happen. It's all sort of in flux right now.

What does the Army do for you as a person? You've stayed in for 18 years, so what is it that makes you want to stick with it?

The Army has been good to me. It helped me mature and it taught me responsibility and integrity. I take responsibility for everything in my civilian job. A lot of times in the civilian world there can be a lot of finger pointing, so I try to take responsibility for everything, right or wrong. I'll be the first to admit if I screwed something up, partially because of the lessons the Army has taught me.

The Army has also helped keep me focused. For example, before the Army, during my first semester of college, I think I had like a 2.3 grade-point average, but I wound up graduating with a degree in political science with somewhere around a 3.58 GPA. Once I got back off Active Duty, I kind of realized

that if I stayed focused on something for more than two minutes, I could actually accomplish a lot.

Have there been any instances in your life that your Army training has helped you to accomplish any tasks or carried over to help you personally?

Again, the Army has helped me stay focused and mission-oriented. It helps me at work, too, to stay organized. Some of the things drive my family crazy though. My family knows that I will talk Army to them, like if we're going on a family trip I'll tell them, "Hey, we're SPing at 0800." I'll have them all lined up, ready to go with all their luggage and everything. I make my daughter take a little walkabout radio with her when she goes down the street and have her do radio checks with me. It's a way that helps me organize my life. I've been doing this so long now that it's all second nature to me, and unfortunately for my family it's second nature for them, too.

As the platoon sergeant, what sort of programs do you have in place to ensure the development of your junior enlisted Soldiers?

There is the whole mentoring process, and we're really big on counseling since we're here. Counseling seems to fall by the wayside when we're back and just drilling, but here we've been able to do a lot of that. Also, we are putting a lot of the junior guys into team leader positions, giving them a little more responsibility. It's been good to watch them grow as Soldiers and as people while we've been here.

With the deployment winding down, what are some of the things you're going to take home with you and remember most about this deployment?

Besides all the pictures and souvenirs I've picked up, it's going to be the memories—not only the memories of Kosovo, but also the guys that I am here with. It's a great group of guys that I am here with, one of the best groups I've had to work with in the entire 18 years I have been in the Army. It's fun when you get all these people from different backgrounds put together. People's true colors come out during a deployment.

Have there been any major challenges you have had to overcome as a platoon

on this deployment?

We had a lot of implants from our headquarters element because we didn't have enough guys to fill out all the slots, so integrating them all in was definitely a challenge.

Also, like I mentioned, people's true colors come out during the deployment. Some people are all squared away at weekend drills, but when you get them out on a deployment, you see that they can hold it together for two days and over the course of the months, things begin to slip a bit.

What do you do in your free time here in Kosovo?

I don't really get a lot of free time here. As the platoon sergeant, it seems like I'm always on call to do something. I go to the gym, watch a lot of DVDs—the same ones over and over again. I guess that's about it for my free time.

Do you have any words of wisdom, any life mantra that you try to live by?

Never volunteer! I sure didn't follow that one very well though, did I? No, really though, I don't really have any secret mantra, I just live my life the best I can.

PATROL (Continued from Page 19)

violators run across the ABL knowing that KFOR cannot cross. The same goes for illegal activities on the Serbian side." After a little more than one month of coordination, the first JSF and KFOR synchronized patrol had been completed and on that first patrol, success was achieved by apprehending two individuals illegally cutting wood.

"Just five years ago when American and Serbian forces interacted, it was through bomb sites and anti-aircraft sites," Ellis said. "Now, for the first time in five years, KFOR and Serbian patrols are conducting a synchronized effort—that is a truly historic event."

"As we often read about history, we don't realize, in essence, that history is written by everyday people," Ellis said. "When I stood on the ABL and looked at those two squads of Soldiers, I realized this was one of those single moments where you have an opportunity to witness history being made."

mond, referring to Troop A, 2-107th Cavalry. "They had all their safety briefings down, they were exactly where they needed to be each time, so we could just come in, pick up (the cargo) and leave. They were very proficient at what they did."

"If we start picking up a load and we notice there's a problem as the lines start to tighten, we release the load," said Thrasher. "Well, that never happened that day. Every time we went to pick up the load, it was rigged correctly, and we were able to pick up the load, so that says a lot for the unit that was rigging."

Since this kind of mission doesn't happen very often, everyone involved seemed to have fun with the training.

"The most fun in doing this kind of thing is when the communication between the pilot and the crew chiefs is dead on—it's as smooth as glass," said Thrasher. "You go right in, put the helicopter right where it needs to be, and then it gets hooked up, taken around, and drops off the load right where it needs to go."

"It's also kind of fun to watch a Hum-vee go through the air."

EIB (Continued from Page 16)

Javelin for firing, said Glenn.

"Most of the tasks on the EIB are tough due to the time restraints put on the task and the attention to detail for each task," said Glenn. "If a soldier misses the simplest step or goes out of sequence then that soldier is a no-go."

"Take the M21 mine. If the soldier does not tap the mine to remove any dirt from the mine then he is a no-go, or on the M249 if he pulls the charging handle

ten) accomplishment.

Journaling allows me an opportunity to keep a record of what it is like to me today. The good, the bad, and the ugly. I take satisfaction out of completing an entry, and because of the way I'm wired, I take enjoyment out of the simple act of writing.

I've used my journal in much the same way that others use an exercise log to optimize their workouts. By reading past entries I have been able to recognize problems in my life that up until then, I had been pretty effective at ignoring. With help from friends, a few long runs, and some direct action, I've been able to isolate and annihilate the cause of the problems. This allows me to keep the eccentric equilibrium of what it is to be me — today — from getting bad and ugly.

The best thing about journaling is that the cost of entry is pretty low. All you need is something to write with, something to keep it all in, and the time and the discipline to keep writing. When I can't use my personal laptop, I keep journal notes in my field notebooks or on scraps of paper. When I get time, I'll synch those notes up with my main

journal file — a little more work but worth it in my mind.

Ultimately, the continuity and the repetition of journaling provide me with the same benefits that running or lifting do — but from a different direction if you will. Writing exercises those dark and quiet parts of the soul that we all have and tend to ignore.

Ultimately, your mind and your emotional wellbeing, like your muscles, require work to maintain strength and flexibility. A creative outlet (of any kind) can be the key to unlocking their potential and improving your quality of life as a whole.

Strength without knowledge and understanding is rarely useful. Neither is understanding without the physical ability to act. Like most things, the best combination is one that seeks balance between the two. For true health and fitness find outlets that exercise both — feed your body and your soul. ★



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XM8 (Continued from Page 9)

The XM8 is based on the H&K's G36, which has many of the same features. Because this is not an entirely new design, features such as the gas system have been in use and are not necessarily prone to bugs associated with new technology. Plus, this weapon has been used in a variety of European armies, so it has a working history, unlike the untested concepts.

"The proof will come when we start testing," Clarke said. "We have some

with the palm down and he was supposed to do palm up then he is a no-go. There are a lot of Soldiers that are afraid of the hand grenades because, out of all the stations out there, it's the grenades station that there is a lot of luck with you that day because some days you can be dead on and some days you might not hit a thing."

A Soldier can no-go two stations and still earn his EIB as long as he doesn't

no-go any other station. But, if the soldier gets 2 no-go's on any one station or three first time no-go's, then that Soldier is done, said Glenn.

With these painstaking standards in place, it's no wonder so few of the Soldiers who attempt the testing pass. Find out next issue how the Soldiers in our task force compare to the average and who have earned the privilege of calling themselves expert infantrymen.

theoretical numbers, but we will build weapons and we will test them hard. And, if the system is not significantly better than the existing weapons, it's not going anywhere."

"We will get soldiers to use the weapons in harsh conditions and get their opinions," Clarke continued. "We will super-cool the weapon. We will fire it to failure to see what breaks," Clarke explained. "We'll drop it, we'll put chemicals on it to see how it reacts. That will

provide the hard data to build a case for reliability, availability and maintainability, or not."

"If everything goes green light across the board," Clarke said. "The weapon could begin reaching the field as early as the middle of fiscal year 2006." ★



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Parting Shots

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